United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional to cease all offensive operations in El Salvador at midnight, Friday; announcement welcomed by Secretary-General.

- Secretary-General says new Indonesian investigation of violent events in East Timor must be "thorough and credible".

- Social Committee approves draft reaffirming legitimacy of struggle for independence, liberation from apartheid and all forms of foreign domination; drafts on mercenaries and transnational dealings with South Africa are among other approvals.

- General Assembly elects 54 Members of International Law Commission.

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A United Nations spokesman said today that Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar had welcomed the announcement by the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) that it would cease all offensive operations in El Salvador at midnight, Friday.

The Secretary-General had been given advance notice of the FMLN's intention by his Representative, Alvaro de Soto, who is in Mexico City participating in talks between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN. Mr. de Soto had also passed the information on yesterday to President Christiani of El Salvador who reacted positively.

The spokesman said the initiative would provide a needed boost in confidence in the negotiating process which was about to end. Important points still remained to be negotiated, he said, but the Secretary-General was encouraged at the new developments. If the attitude of the principals was translated into genuine restraint on the ground, it could well mark the beginning of the end of the long conflict, he said.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was encouraged by the progress in the negotiations, and he hoped that before too long, perhaps as early as the end of next week,

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talks on cease-fire modalities, with the participation of Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding could begin in earnest.

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The Secretary-General said today that a new investigation of Tuesday's violent events in Dili, East Timor, to be conducted by the Indonesian Government, must be "thorough and credible".

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar's Spokesman told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had seen press reports from Jakarta indicating that the Indonesian authorities intended to hold such a new investigation.

He said the Special Rapporteur on Torture of the Commission of Human Rights, who is currently in Jakarta, had indicated that even though he was not an eyewitness to the events in Dili, he would report to the Secretary-General on information that had come to his attention. In the meantime, the spokesman said, the Special Rapporteur had conveyed his concern to the authorities in Jakarta and asked them to ensure that the physical integrity of those taken into custody by the Indonesian authorities was preserved -- a request which the authorities had agreed to honour.

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The General Assembly would reaffirm the legitimacy of peoples' struggle for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial domination, apartheid and foreign occupation in all its forms, under the terms of one of six draft resolutions approved yesterday by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

By that text on self-determination, independence and human rights, the Assembly would reiterate that peace in South Africa could be guaranteed only by the establishment of majority rule through the full and free exercise of adult suffrage by all the people in a united and undivided country. It would also call on Israel to refrain from constant deliberate violation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

By another text, Member States whose transnational corporations continued to do business with South Africa would be called upon to take steps to terminate those dealings.

Other texts concerned the use of mercenaries as a means to violate human rights, the status of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, realization of the right to self-determination and the International Literacy Year, respectively.

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The General Assembly this morning elected 34 members to the International Law Commission for five-year terms beginning 1 January 1992, to fill vacancies

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by members whose term of office will expire at the end of 1991. The Commission was established by the Assembly on 21 November 1947 for the promotion of the progressive development of international law and its codification. Members of the Commission were elected from a list of 49 candidates nominated by the Governments of Member States.

Shortly before the vote, Boutros Boutros Ghali (Egypt) withdrew, leaving 48 candidates for the 34 vacancies.

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